

Letter from Alexander Melville Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, January 18, 1875, with transcript

Home, January 18th, 1875. (No envelope) My dear Aleck,

I cannot involve myself in any responsibility in connection with your publications. The cost of casting types is but a very small part of the expense of printing a book and I might be speedily beggared were I to embark in the speculation. I cannot afford to lose, and you have no matured plans to save yourself from loss. Besides, so far as I am informed, even this matter of the proposed book is not yet prepared. The first step is to get up the Mss. of which you wish to print, then (or simultaneously with its preparation) submit proposals for Institutional subscriptions. I am afraid that you will seriously embarrass yourself by rushing into expenses for the return of which you take no preliminary steps to secure yourself. But more than all, I am afraid that you will unpreparedly injure your health, by undertaking more work than your time and strength allow you to perform.

You have received the counsel of friends, on this point, for so long a time, and you have felt the weariness of nature in your recent breakdown! Be wise in time and proceed with caution. Any assistance that I can give you in preparing exercises, revising proofs and so on, I shall cheerfully render. I shall be happy to ease your work by sharing it, as much as possible; but I cannot undertake a partnership in the responsibility of publication. I have done my share of work in that department.

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I am sorry to hear of the death of one of the V. S. teachers, and the illness of another. These events are fresh warnings to you of the danger of overwork, but it is ridiculous nonsense to talk of V. S. in connection with their cases! Overwork at telegraphy or anything, would do mischief; but overwork at V. S. not more than anything else! Now be cool and patient, "more haste less speed", and don't put your arm further out than

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you can easily draw it back again! If you send me a rough draft of a prospectus for Institutions I shall put it in shape for you; and also sketches of exercises I can fill up, so as to advance your work in readiness for printing. Do be a little more business like in your correspondence. Your first letter received 18 days after you left! Best love from all.

Your affectionate father, Alex. Melville Bell. P. S. I have answered the letter you enclosed from Miss Howell.